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Received Sept 22/78
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EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER CONSIDERATIONS

EVIDENCE PRESENTED TO THE

MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE INQUIRY BY:

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QUESTION: What is the responsibility of the Witness relative to employment and manpower in the NWT?

ANSWER: The easiest way to answer this question is to quote our objective: "The Division is responsible for determining needs, developing strategies and administering programs directed at increasing employment levels and the employability of Northern Residents. The Division provides an employment and training placement and referral service; we advise on program needs and possible strategies to overcome employment problems of Northerners. We develop, co-ordinate and administer programs which will increase employment and will provide training in career development for Northern Residents."

We have developed and operate an employment counselling service throughout the NWT.

If I might paraphrase a quote that seems to say as much about our purpose as anything, I would say that, "Training serves all of our purposes - liberty, justice and all other aims - but the one it serves most is the equality of opportunity."

It is our contention that the untrained and unemployed will "become the victims of progress rather than the beneficiaries." Our Division, along with our Colleagues, attempts to ensure Northern people are beneficiaries rather than victims of the changes in the North.



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QUESTION: What is the background of your Division and its relationship to other sections of the Government and Industry?

ANSWER: The genesis of the Division and its responsibilities go back to the early 60's when the Federal Government set up within the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (the Northern Affairs and Natural Resources) and under the Vocational Section of the Education Department, the Selection and Placement Service. Their terms of reference were, essentially, quite simple - refer Northern people to employment and/or training for employment. This group was closely involved with most major and minor developments that sought out training and employment opportunities for Northerners throughout the 60's.

With the move of the Government of the N.W.T. to Yellowknife and the transfer of staff from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to Northwest Territories Government status, there was a change in emphasis of the Selection and Placement group. It became, at this time, primarily a training section in the Continuing and Special Education section of the Department of Education. At this time, it seemed proper to move out of the active placement field as Canada Manpower had moved North of 60°.

By the Fall of 1970, it was apparent that our Government still had an essential role to fill in the area of employment and training referrals. Hence, in January 1972 the Employment Division was formed reporting to the Director of the Department of Local Government.

In April 1975, the Division was moved to the Department of Economic Development in order to be closer to employment creating activities.

QUESTION: Specifically, what group or sections make up this Division and what are their specific responsibilities?

ANSWER: We presently operate the following distinct sections:

G.N.W.T. Training Positions: We presently have 45 funded positions in Government service at the mid-management and officer level. Those range from Adult Educator, to Auditor, to Fish & Wildlife Officer. These positions are assigned to Departments on the basis of their ability to train; the need and the guarantee of a full position at the end of the program. The program allows for a mix of on-the-job training and formal training (including University courses leading to a degree).

Apprenticeship Training: The program operates, in general, as it does throughout the Nation. This means that courses and certification are recognized in other parts of Canada and that the individual has met certain set standards. I am sure you are more interested in the areas that are specifically designed to assist Northerners in the area of skill development. Within the total program some 66% are Northerners.

Within the Civil Service 70% are Northern Natives with the balance being other Northerners.

In an attempt to enhance the development of a Northern skilled labour force, the G.N.W.T. presently has 91 apprentice trainee positions. As of this year, 127 Indian, Inuit and Metis have achieved either Journeyman certification or InterProvincial certification or both in their chosen trade.

It has often been suggested that Government in the North never looks to unique Northern solutions to problems. In the Apprenticeship Program, we have designed a program so successful that it is now being exported to the Provinces.

Because many communities are too small to support tradesmen in all construction trades areas but yet require skilled people in the field of carpentry, electricity, plumbing, painting & decorating, we have a fully developed designated trade, unique, we believe, in Canada, called the Housing Maintenance trade. This program is a regular apprenticeship program with certification that takes three years of practical experience plus three six-week Theory courses to complete. This program ensures that Northern people are being trained to maintain their own communities without always being dependent on southern experts or on residents from outside the home community. During the 2½ years the program has been active, 8 journeyman have been certified with 89 presently in training.

Special Employment Programs: With this program we work with private sector employers by assisting them to find suitable Northern employees. If needed we assist in the design of training programs as well as in a financial way through cost sharing of training-on-the-job.

To illustrate this, when the Federal Cabinet approved the Dome Petroleum application, our field staff ensured that Dome's job opportunities were made available to all concerned communities. We facilitated the movement of the applications to Dome's Personnel staff for final selection. We are cost sharing three of the trainees and, as well, have assisted in orientation seminars for Dome's supervisory staff.

An example of one of our original efforts is the initial arrangements for the Gulf-Coppermine rotational employment scheme.

Placement and Relocation Services: In those areas where there are no Canada Manpower Centres, this Division acts as a placement referral agency. In order to do this we use:

Field Staff - located in Frobisher Bay, Rankin Inlet, Inuvik, Yellowknife, Fort Smith, and Hay River are charged with the overall responsibility of the Division.

Labour Pools - In communities of Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Fort Franklin, Fort Norman, Fort Providence, Rae/Edzo, Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet and Eskimo Point, money is made available to Community or Hamlet Councils to hire a local person in the community to do placement and expediting of community persons to jobs. They work closely with the responsible employment office in their area.

Relocation Funds - A small budget that allows us to move people to a job when other relocation means failure. Decisions are always at the field officer level in this case.

Territorial Employment Record and Information System (T.E.R.I.S.):

This is an attempt to inventory the labour force of the N.W.T. On a voluntary basis, the population between the ages of 14 and 65 have been asked to complete a questionnaire. The information is then stored in a computer and is callable either as a statistic or by individual. The statistical portion of the computer program allows us to identify skills available in a community, area or Region of the N.W.T. The individual information program allows us to call names of people who fit given job criteria. This, in turn, means that we can approach an unemployed person with precise information on a job for which we already know they qualify.

Community Employment Strategy program (C.E.S.): This section works directly with the Federal Government experimenting and developing new approaches to solve employment problems. The basis of this developmental program is direct community involvement in planning its own economic future within its capacity.

As the Communities' knowledge and expertise in the field of developing its own economy becomes more sophisticated, the community organization will assume many of the responsibilities now provided by Governments. We expect most people will be more supportive of their own ideas than a program developed by outsiders, even though the program has only been developed to benefit these same people.

This section will also be responsible for developing G.N.W.T. programs with the same basic philosophy for other communities not included in the Territorial/Federal Community Employment Strategy Agreement.

QUESTION: What, in your opinion, is the status of employment opportunities in the N.W.T. today?

ANSWER: If one looks at the broad picture of opportunity to participate across the N.W.T., it can only be observed that, with the exception of certain pockets there is no equality of opportunity for employment - because the employment simply does not exist. Of 67 communities in the N.W.T. only 9 could be considered to have a substantial economic base outside government support. The population of the 67 communities is estimated at 45,488. The population of the 9 communities with a reasonable degree of employment stability, is 20,251 or slightly less than 50%.

What this, in effect, means is that the majority of communities and, hence, the population is supported by some form of government funding. Jobs are limited and, in relation to population growth, are becoming even more scarce.

At the present time, we estimate the N.W.T. labour force as 17,000. Ethnically this breaks down approximately into 14% Indian, 33% Inuit, 6% Metis and 47% other. The "other" category could contain people for any of the previous categories as the records are listed as people indicating their particular status. We have concrete information on approximately 14,000 people at this time and are improving this capability continually. Although clearly not definitive, we have, from existing records, established that at the present time there appears to be between 10 and 12,000 jobs in the N.W.T. This is exclusive of the cottage industry piece work type of employment and hunting, fishing and trapping pursuits.

This means a gross difference in a rough order of magnitude of 5,000 people in excess of jobs available. I say rough order of magnitude for several reasons. Many are by choice engaged in traditional pursuits who can be considered self-employed and therefore not looking for other forms of employment. Also, I have made no attempt to pull out of this

*define this
- age bracket
- both male & female?
- many, as stated
self-employed. Could
you estimate 5000
how many
will be in
in wage employment?
Metis as estimate
a most of 2000
employable northern
residents
employable*

figure people who are unable or not interested in working. There are, of course, people who do not wish full time employment. In addition, however, if we can assume the labour force is growing at the same rate as the population, our labour force is growing at the rate of about 1,000 people per year. Even without definitive figures, we can assume problems of significant proportion.

QUESTION: What, in your opinion, would a moratorium of 10 years do to the employment situation in the N.W.T.?

ANSWER: // A no development approach to the N.W.T. can only aggravate an already intolerable rate of unemployment.

As an illustration:

Aklavik has a population of 700 people

There are 54 permanent jobs

There are 17 casual jobs

There are 13 people working by contract

There are 42 seasonal jobs (includes trappers)

A total of 126 people working during March of 1976. In addition, there were 79 people actively seeking employment. This works out to a rate of 38% of the group. There is no attempt with this figure to look at the working age population; the figure only identified jobs and people actively seeking employment.

During this same period, Fort McPherson's employment picture was equally dismal.

Fort McPherson has a population of 817

There are 62 permanent jobs

There are 52 seasonal jobs

There were 12 men trapping full time

There were 22 casual jobs.

Someone might ask why some petroleum jobs went unfilled. Just 2 or 3 years ago I would have attributed the difference between jobs and population to lack of interest.

A total of 148 people working during March of 1976. In addition, there were 129 people seeking work. This gives an unemployment rate of 46%. This, at least to me, indicates a very real need for employment creation.

But of even greater concern is the rate of growth of the school age population. These young people are graduating in ever increasing numbers with even better grade levels. Unless job opportunities increase in the N.W.T. they have only two choices; relocate to Southern Canada or live on welfare.

The Employment Division, it is obvious, believes that some form of development is necessary. To have a mandate "to determine needs and develop strategies" and to design opportunities for self-reliance in a totally government economy is to admit that the people of the N.W.T. must always be recipients of our Nation's largess but never contributors to the well being of the Nation.

QUESTION: I assume you are speaking of employment in Southern Canada sense; that is, in the wage economy. But what about trapping? Is that not an equally valid employment?

ANSWER: Of course, and as indicated earlier, we recognize that people who trap for a living are self-employed in the same way as a commercial fisherman, or, if you will, a farmer. However, a distinction must be recognized between the once-a-week or part-time trapper and the self-employed trapper. For instance, in 1972/73 in the Mackenzie Valley, 889 "trappers" sold fur valued at \$459,578 or an average of \$516 per trapper. Of the 889 trappers only 110 earned more than \$1,000 in the year.

It is obvious that on the average, most people maintain themselves and their families by some other means, with trapping supplementing this means.

QUESTION: Do you think that people will locate to other areas of the N.W.T. for employment?

ANSWER: Yes, given that the relocation is carried out in some form of rotational basis that allows a reasonably frequent period at home. Our experience to date with Coppermine, Pond Inlet and the mining operations at Nanasivik indicate that given reasonable conditions, people prefer positive employment to other forms of support.

QUESTION: Given that Northern people will be employed on the pipeline construction, what plans are contemplated for counselling these people to enhance their ability to gain and hold employment?

ANSWER: We have indicated in our forecasts a counsellor for each construction spread. In addition, we have tentative plans for a communication net to allow the best possible access to the home communities. The communication net will be planned so as to integrate with other systems that will be set up, e.g. Manpower.

Note Arctic has indicated this a continuing responsibility.

QUESTION: How will information be provided to prospective employers regarding the Northern work force?

ANSWER: We anticipate the Territorial Employment Record and Information System (T.E.R.I.S.) to give us immediate access to skills category by community, region, area or the N.W.T. as a whole.

The system will then allow us to take individual job offers to people with the required skills.

The skill profiles will be handled at the Headquarters level. When it comes time to contact individuals this will be handled by a Regional Officer who has an established contact in every community. These contacts are already established and we anticipate that our problem will be one of volume of work rather than the mechanism.

QUESTION: How do you propose to deal with people presently employed in essential services who wish to leave for the high paying construction job?

ANSWER: I see no way other than through counselling and persuasion. Anything resembling co-ersion would hardly be acceptable.

QUESTION: Have you had any discussion with the interested Unions on the use of the Northern Labour force:

ANSWER: The first contact with the Union was in 1971 when N.W.T. officials met with the Union. We have had little contact from them until this year.

In early July of this year, representatives of the Department of Economic Development, Canada Manpower and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs met with the Pipeline Advisory Council of Canada which is composed of unions and contracting firms associated with pipeline construction in this country. Discussions focussed on the subject of northern manpower delivery during Mackenzie Valley Pipeline construction and establishing a forum for ongoing communication between governments, unions and contractors.

With respect to the Northern Labour force, we feel that the pipeline unions are aware of their responsibilities toward ensuring that northern residents benefit from training and employment opportunities. However, in qualifying this position, I should add that much work remains to be done in establishing with unions the specific mechanisms to ensure this maximum opportunity. In this context, union officials have requested information on the potential northern labour force available to participate in pipeline construction and some indication of the level of skills possessed by northern residents. Our understanding is that the unions will make every effort to integrate skilled northern workers into the pipeline labour force. On the other hand, they have emphasized the importance of training-on-the job for those with limited experience.

We anticipate that in the near future preliminary discussions will be scheduled with building and construction trades unions to determine their position.

To reiterate, our contact with unions involved in all aspects of the pipeline project construction has been of a preliminary or exploratory nature.

Future discussions will address specific union related issues and will be directed towards coordinating the role of various participants, including government agencies, unions, contractors and the northern labour force.

QUESTION: What is your relationship to Canada Manpower?

ANSWER: We work together in both training referrals and placement. Our staff, because they have easier access to and closer connection in the communities, carry out all functions in those areas where there are no Manpower Centres, making reference to Manpower and working closely with the proper Manpower Centre for his region. Referrals for Manpower service will be made to the Manpower Centre by our officer. If it is a training or placement referral where public funds will be expended, these two offices determine where financial responsibilities lies and then action the program accordingly. Generally speaking any Northern Resident who does not qualify for Manpower services, will receive equivalent services from the G.N.W.T.

QUESTION: What is your definition of a Northern Resident:

ANSWER: To define Northerners in rigid terms would, unfortunately be detrimental to some of our population regardless of how the definition was worded. We have, therefore, adopted a set of priorities under which the G.N.W.T. will help individuals in job placement.

1. Persons born in the N.W.T. and who have resided here all their lives.
2. Persons born in the N.W.T. and who have lived here the majority of their lives.
3. Persons raised in the N.W.T. and who have lived here a substantial portion of their lives.
4. Persons who have lived a substantial number of years in the N.W.T.

The term "born" denotes a person born physically in the N.W.T. or born outside the N.W.T. to parents normally resident in the N.W.T.

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EXPERIENCE: Hudson's Bay Fur Trade 1952-1955
Principal/Teacher, Indian Affairs Branch 1957-1963
Set up Counselling Service for Indian Students 1963-1965
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Principal, Eastern Arctic, Indian and 1965-1967
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Employment Placement Officer, Fort Smith, N.W.T. 1967-1969
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